

Interview H0214: Urgyen [tib. o rgyan], (India, 1983) : Part No. 6 of 9

The interviewee was a well-known Drepung Loseling monk who at one time held the powerful position of chagdampa. He discusses a number of positions and offices in Drepung Monastery such as the Riji.

Q

In earlier times, the two Chagdampa were appointed by the two [Shengo](#). However, at the time of the 13th Dalai Lama, they started to be appointed by the government. During the Reting regency, they were again appointed according to the traditional system by the [Shengo](#) and then it was confirmed by the government. After it was confirmed, they would tell the [Yigtsang](#) and the [Yigtsang](#) would tell the [Shengo](#) and the [Shengo](#) would deliver the message. The Chagdampa had two Geyog as their servants. The [Shingnyer](#) were also similar and the Chagdampa and [Shingnyer](#) had to pay the [Shengo](#) a little over 100 [dotse](#) as a donation for the [tonggo](#) and as a gift, right?

A

The [Shingnyer](#) had to pay 29 [dotse](#) and 35 [sang](#), and the Chagdampa had to pay 30 [dotse](#).

Q

The [Shengo](#) would bring two Nangma from the monks who were part of the same [dobdo](#) club (toptsang) and if they didn't have such monks, then they would hire people. The 2 Tsogchen Jama came from the Jiso and in Drepung there were 16 Thabyog. The two Tratsang each had 8 Thabyog. However, during the Mönlam, there were 64 Thabyog. They they would hire the extra ones from Dambag [tib. dan 'bag] village. The Lama Migtsema [tib. bla ma dmigs brtse ma] came from [Gomang](#). He would recite the Migtsema prayer on the roof top of [tsogchen](#) assembly hall and also ask for the Söjong Sutra [tib. gso sbyong gi mdo]. The Jatsü depa [tib. bya tshul sde pa] came from [Deyang](#) and he

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looked after the tea. The east Chökang depa [tib. mchod khang sde pa] came from [Deyang](#) and the west Chökang depa came from Ngagpa, right?

A

Yes.

Q

What privileges [tib. thob thang] did the Chökang depa have?

A

They had the title/rank of an ordinary [tsidrung](#).

Q

The Phodrang depa [tib. pho brang sde pa] normally came from [Gomang](#) khamtsen in rotation. However, there was a system of leasing it [tib. bogs ma bogs 'dzin], so how much lease fee would they charge?

A

They would consult and settle this internally.

Q

They would send a candidate and an alternative candidate (tib. wöndra ['os 'dra]), but the candidate will be approved. They are a 1st and a 2nd candidate but the 1st will be approved, right? The Jiso's candidates came from those who were Nyertsang or were ex-Nyertsang [tib. gnyer tshang thon zur] in the two big Tratsang and it depended on their luck as to who got it. The Jiso had a very large place to administer and they had 8 Chandzö under them: the 2 Tsangja [tib. gtsang phyag], the 2 Phenja [tib. 'phan phyag], the 2 Lhoja [tib. lho phyag] and the 2 Jija [tib. spyi phyag]. They stayed in the monastery permanently and did the work there. There were others who were in charge of their various other places. The two Tsogchen Jama were appointed by the Jiso, but who appointed the clerk called Lhengye trunyig [tib. lhan rgyas drung yig]?

A

They were hired by the [Shengo](#) who chose reliable people for this position.

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Q

The assembly hall (tib. [dukhang](#) ['du khang]) was taken care of by the Chökang depa. Where did the monks come from who yelled the [chuke](#) [tib. [chu](#) skad] to inform [all the monks] that there was [gye](#) that time?

A

They came in rotation from the east and the west Chökang [depa].

Q

Were there any other staff of the Jiso in the [tsogchen](#)?

A

No. That's all.

Q

Now, maternal uncle, I am going ask you about the [Riji](#) [tib. rigs spyi]. From where did the members of the [Riji](#) come and what did they do?

A

The abbots of Ngagpa, [Gomang](#), Shagor [tib. [shag](#) sgor], and [Deyang](#) Colleges were in the [Riji](#).

Q

From where did the [Riji](#) get their estates?

A

They didn't have that many estates. They only had a big estate called Rama which was in Phenpo [tib. 'phan po]. It had many [miser](#). As for the daily [tonggo](#) that they had to do, they got that from a small [shiga](#) in the Shün [tib. shun] area in Dongkar. [unclear] They would also collect about 30-40 [khe](#) of grain.

Q

Who would go to collect it?

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A

[unclear]

Q

The [Riji](#) would perform the [tonggo](#) with whatever income they collected, right?

A

Yes. [unclear] It would rotate every 6 years. The general income they got for the [Riji](#) was kept by the Lhengye (tib. lhan rgyas) but some income went to the [abbot's] [labrang](#). They would give the [tonggo](#) from that.

[unclear] Under the [Riji](#) there were many [gempo](#) like in Nyen [tib. gnyan], Chongye [tib. 'phyongs rgyas], [Drigung](#) [tib. 'bri gung], Wölga [tib. 'ol dga'], Dagpo [tib. dwags po], Kongpo, Phenpo, and Nam [tib. snam].

Q

Who appointed these [gempo](#)?

A

They were appointed by the Lhengye. Their term coincided with the abbot's term. When the abbot's term was over, the gempo's term was also over.

[unclear] In the Mönlam, I would collect the money given when people requested dedications (tib. ngöten [bsngo rten]) for prayers. I would write the receipts for this money. I also went to the abbot's [shag](#) and handed over the ngöten money like 3 [sho](#) and 5 [sho](#), etc. and I got the receipts and put a red seal on them. [unclear] The late Ngagpa Khempo would not even look at the receipts and just say they are okay. [unclear]

Q

How did they appoint you?

A

In the beginning, the [Loseling](#) Khempo appointed me. Probably the Ngagpa Khempo introduced me. Sometimes when I was in Lhasa, they sent a message and called me and I had to go carrying my own food. Sometimes, they would give me about 3-4 [khe](#) of

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butter when they received butter. And they also gave me 1-2 bakhag [tib. sbag khag] of tea leaves. Usually, I didn't get anything. When they gave [tsampa](#) to the [Riji](#), they would give me 1 [khe](#) of [tsampa](#).